

Once upon  
a Time...



by Aaron  
Williams

Once upon a time, a poor woodcutter and his wife found themselves starving, due to a blight upon the land. Deciding they could escape starvation if there were only two members of their household, they abandoned their only children, Hansel and Gretel, in the deepest part of the forest. They wandered lost for many days...

WHY WERE PAPA AND MAMA SO CRUEL TO US, GRETEL?

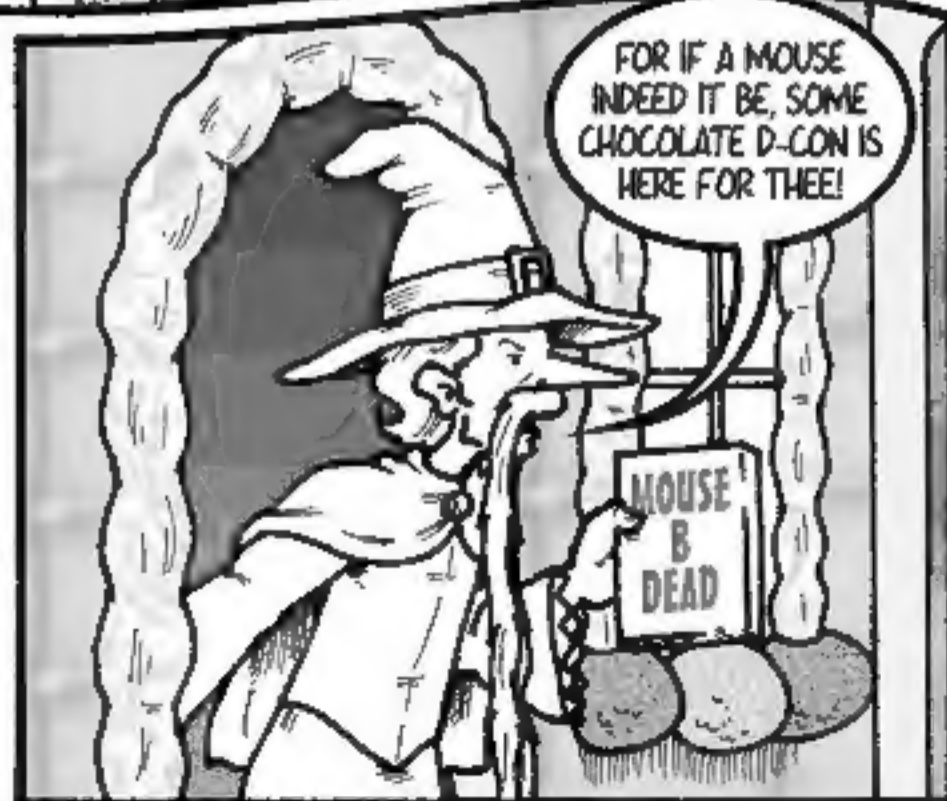
I KNOW NOT, BROTHER HANSEL. WHAT EVER SHALL BECOME OF US?

PERHAPS THE GNOMES WHO BIRTHED YOU AND LEFT YOU ON OUR DOORSTEP WILL RETURN AND TAKE YOU TO THEIR KINGDOM.

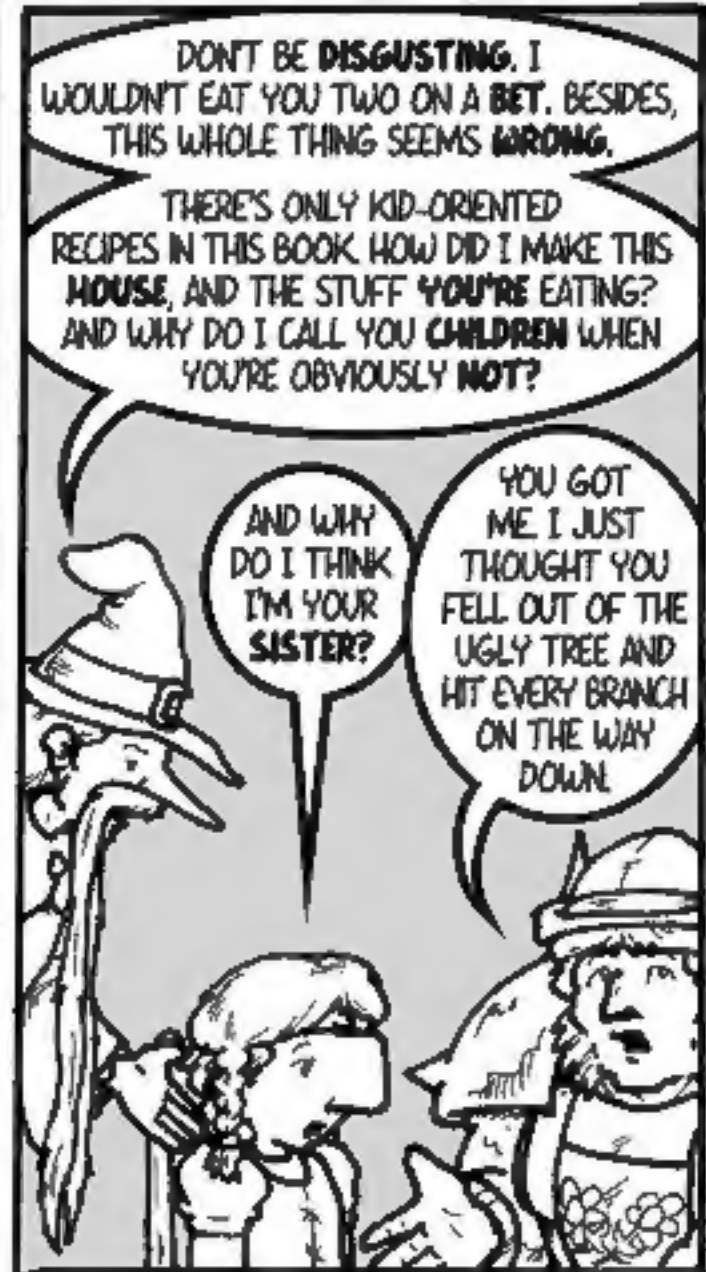
YOU DO KNOW THAT IT IS BECAUSE OF THEIR DISLIKE OF YOU THAT WE ARE IN THIS PICKLE.

AND PERHAPS THE OGRE CLAN YOU GOT KICKED OUT OF WILL BATHE YOU AND RE-ACCEPT YOU INTO THE TRIBE.

OUR PARENTS DISLIKE ME? AH, THAT WOULD EXPLAIN WHY THEY LEFT ME TO DIE WITH YOU, DEAR BROTHER.







Once upon a time, a poor wood-carver wished for a son. He was old and had no wife, and no one to inherit his shop or learn his trade. So, one day, he decided to make a son from a fine piece of wood he found in the forest. He carved with great skill and painted the puppet with a steady hand, but for all his efforts, it remained mere wood....



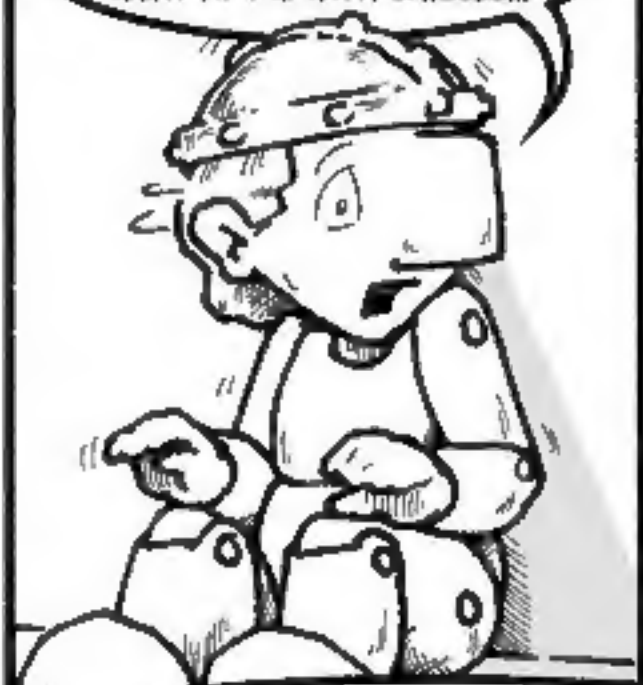
OH, DEAR. I GUESS WE'RE SHORT ONE CONSCIENCE UNTIL WE CAN FIND A NEW TALKING CRICKET...



BUT I'M HERE, PINOCCHIO! YOUR, UM, FATHER'S WISH. THE ONE HE WAS SUPPOSED TO MAKE, IS ABOUT TO COME TRUE!



GAAH! OH, WHEW. WHAT A NIGHTMARE... SOME GUY HIT ME WITH AN AXE, AND THEN ANOTHER LUNATIC WENT AT ME WITH CHISELS...



AHEM, YES, WELL, YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN THE CHANCE TO BECOME A REAL BOY. IF YOU FOLLOW YOUR CONSCIENCE AND PROVE YOURSELF, YOU'LL BE REAL RATHER THAN WOOD!



MY CONSCIENCE?

UM, YES. HE'S A LITTLE UNDER THE WEATHER AT THE MOMENT, BUT...



SOMEONE ORDERED A REPLACEMENT CONSCIENCE? OH, DEAR. TELL ME ABOUT IT. I'M JUST A TEMP, AND THEY AREN'T PAYING ME ENOUGH FOR THIS.



AH, WELL, BE SURE TO KEEP PINOCCHIO ON THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW, AND HE'LL BE JUST FINE. UH-HUH, LADY, THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW DOESN'T GET YOU VERY FAR, TAKE IT FROM ME. WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY HOUSE?

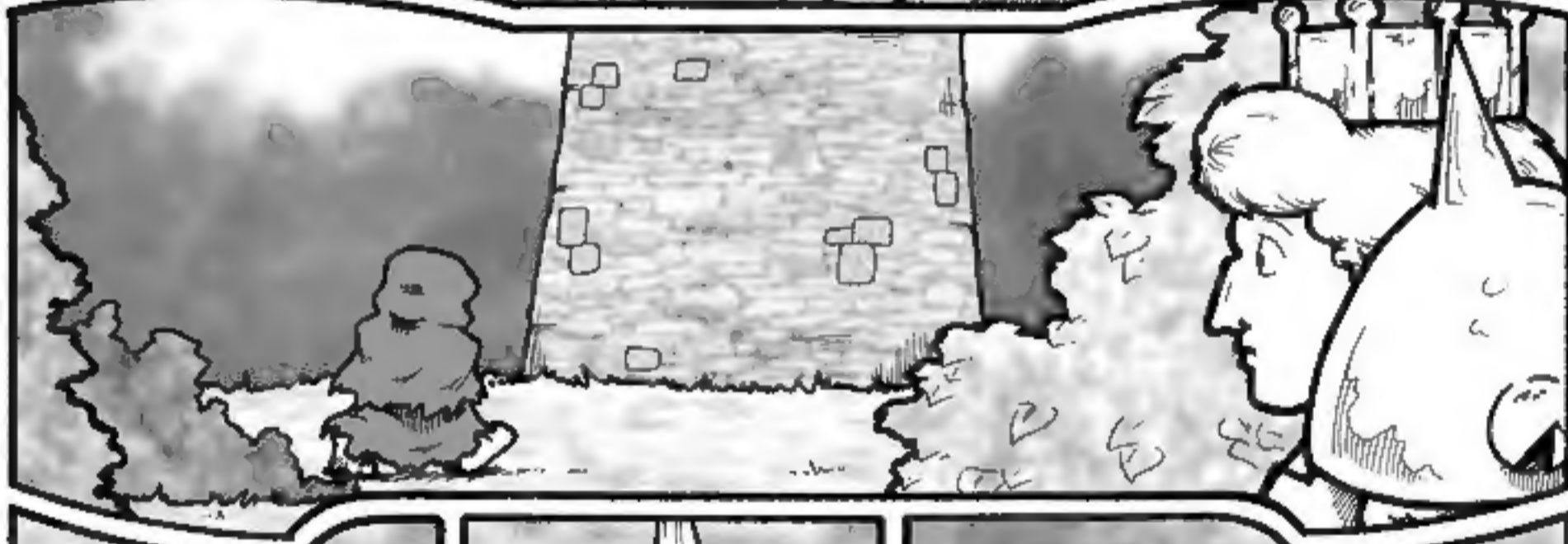




Once upon a time, there was a handsome prince. He was traveling through a dark, murky forest when he heard the most beautiful voice, singing a lonely song. He became enraptured, and followed the sound to a lonely tower with a single window high above the ground. He searched and searched, but there was no entrance for the prince. Frustrated, he sat at the edge of the forest to think.



ZOUNDS! HOW SHALL I GET TO THE FAIR MAIDEN THAT SURELY RESIDES IN YON TOWER? THERE BE NO STAIR OR PORTAL TO THIS FORTRESS!



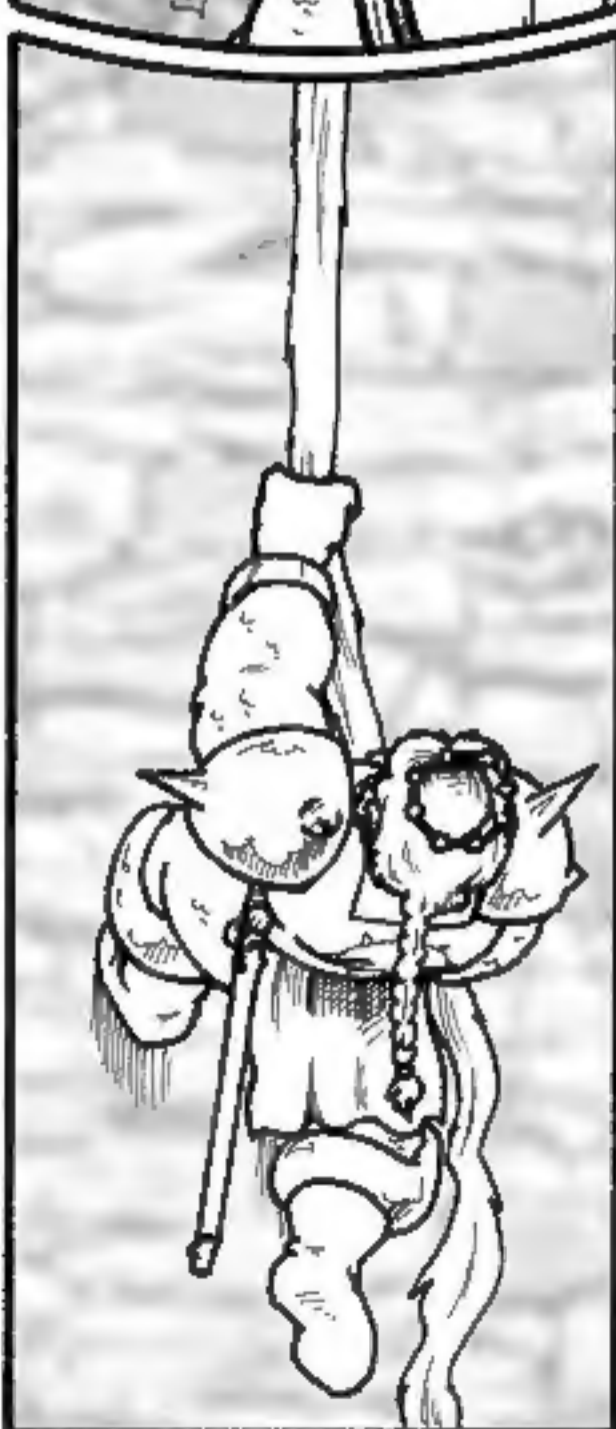
RAPUNZEL, RAPUNZEL, LET DOWN YOUR LONG HAIR!



AH-HA! I SHALL WAIT FOR YON HAG TO LEAVE, AND THEN THE MAID SHALL BE MINE!



LATER





HO, WITCH!  
WOULDST THOU  
THROW US MY  
HAIR?

YOU TOSS ME  
THE IDOL, I THROW  
YOU THE WHIP...

SHE DIDST  
CLUNK HER  
HEAD MOST  
MIGHTILY.

WELL, THIS  
IS A FINE KETTLE  
OF FISH STUCK IN  
A TOWER WITH A  
MORON.

OH YEAH? WELL, WHY  
DONT YOU JUST MIX UP ONE  
OF YOUR MAGIC POTIONS AND BLOW  
THE TOWER TO BITS LIKE YOU  
USUALLY DO?

WHAT  
IS GOING ON  
HERE?

I DONT KNOW!  
A MINUTE AGO, I'D  
SWEAR I WAS A PRINCE...  
AND THAT I FOUND YOU  
ATTRACTIVE...

WE'VE GOT  
TO GET OUT OF  
HERE.

IT'S TOO FAR  
TO JUMP WITHOUT  
BREAKING OUR NECKS.  
DO YOU THINK  
NODWICK CAN  
HELP US?

NODWICK!  
QUICK! SNAP  
OUT OF IT!

YOU'VE GOT TO  
HELP US GET DOWN FROM  
HERE BEFORE—

Once upon yet another time, a poor fool traded his mother's cow for magic beans. Upon planting them, they grew into a beanstalk that reached up, up, and into the clouds! Being not afraid, the fool boldly climbed into the sky to see what the beanstalk held in store. He made it to the top of the beanstalk, and beheld a castle, floating upon the clouds!



AMAZING!  
SUCH A  
WONDER!

THAT A CASTLE,  
TEN TIMES AS LARGE AS  
ANY I HAVE SEEN, COULD  
BE SUPPORTED BY THE  
CLOUDS!

HOW CAN  
THIS BE?

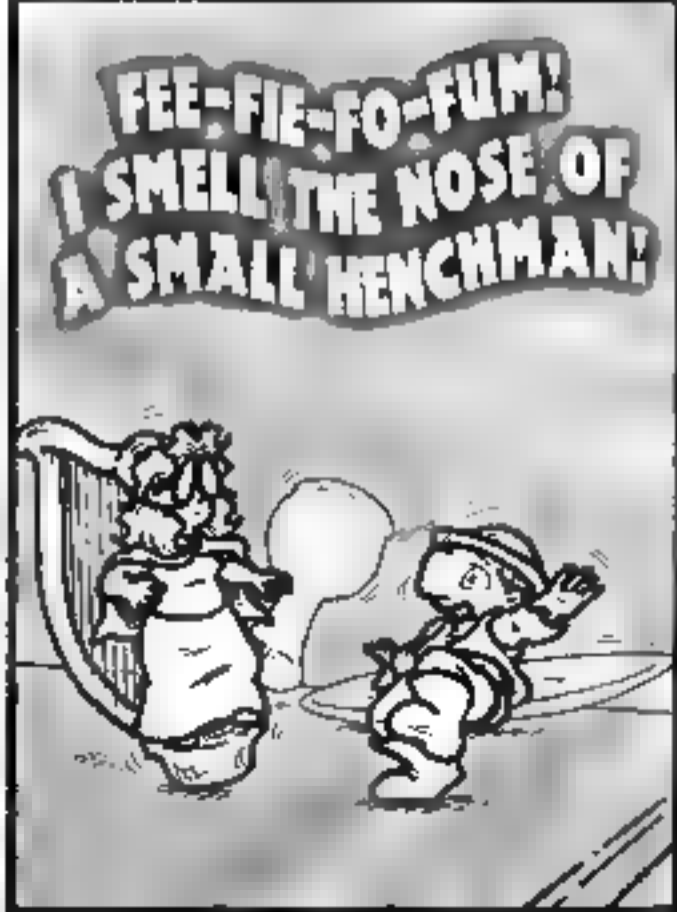
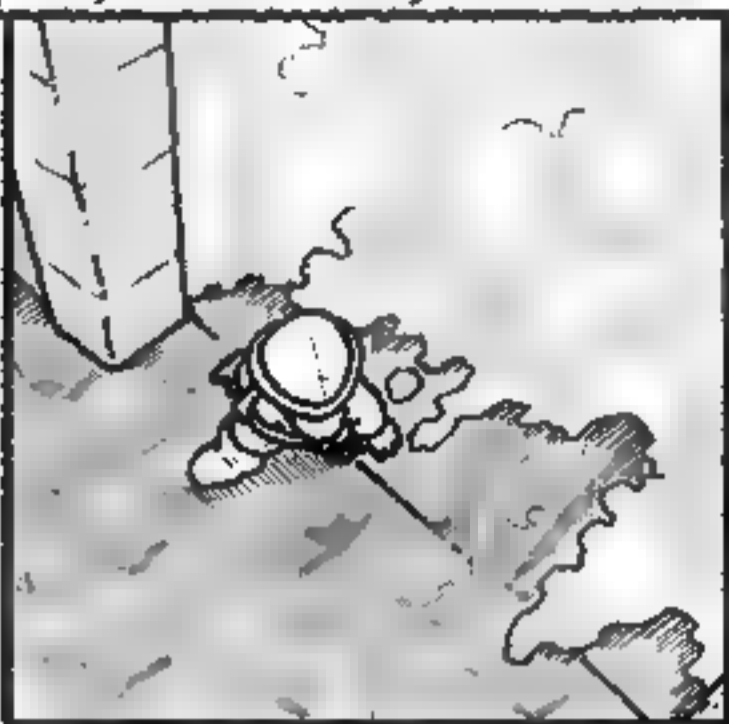
HEY, HOW CAN THIS  
BE? AND THAT BY SHEER  
COINCIDENCE, A BEANSTALK PLANTED  
IN A RANDOM FARM WOULD LEAD  
STRAIGHT TO IT...

And then the fool remem-  
bered he was SUPPOSED to  
be a fool, and got on with it!

OH, DUUUUUUUH!  
PRETTY CASTLE...

ZONK!

The fool made his way into the castle





A HENCH  
WHAT?

I DON'T KNOW.  
IT JUST POPPED  
INTO MY HEAD.

SPEAKING  
OF POPPING, THAT  
NOISE RESEMBLING  
A STARVING MAN  
CHOWING DOWN ON  
CELERY IS MY  
SPINE...

Once upon a time,  
a beautiful princess was  
under the spell of an evil  
witch, and she was made  
to sleep for a hundred  
years. One day,  
a handsome  
prince rode up  
on a horse. All  
he needed to  
do was bestow  
a kiss upon--



NOT  
ON YOUR  
LIFE.

AND WE'VE BOTH  
DONE THE WITCH AND PRINCE  
THING ALREADY.

Once upon a time, there was a little girl named Goldilocks. She  
was wandering the forest, when she came upon the home of the three bears.  
Being hungry, she smelled the porridge cooling in the house, and--



BUT I'M STILL  
FULL FROM EATING THE  
GINGERBREAD HOUSE.

Once upon a time, a little girl in a Red Riding hood was sent with a basket of goodies to take to her grandmother. There was a deep, dark forest between Red Riding hood and her Grandmother's house, and in it, lived a big, bad wolf.



Once upon a time, there was a beautiful princess. Her beauty was so great it outshone that of the queen. The queen grew jealous, and exiled the princess to the forest, in the hopes that she would be felled by the beasts living there. The princess was found by a kindly troupe of seven dwarves, five of whom were on vacation, and one of which had a hyperactive thyroid condition...



Once upon a time... the narrator decided to take a few minutes to sort some things out. Take five.

OKAY... I THINK I'M YEAGAR IS THAT RIGHT?

YEAH. IT LOOKS LIKE WE'VE GOT OUR MINDS BACK FOR A WHILE.

NOT THAT IT HELPS. ANYONE REMEMBER HOW WE GOT HERE?

NO, BUT I'D SETTLE FOR JUST KNOWING WHAT THE HECK IS HAPPENING.

ME, TOO. IT'S LIKE THE WORLD KEEPS CHANGING, BUT YOU DON'T NOTICE FOR A WHILE.

WELL, I'VE FIGURED ONE THING OUT ABOUT IT...

OH, THIS SHOULD BE GOOD.

LET'S HEAR IT. WHAT CONCRETE FACT COULD YOU POSSIBLY HAVE DISCOVERED?

DIFFANY'S PROBABLY IN ON IT.

HOW CAN THAT BE?

SHE ISN'T HERE.

NO, AND SHE'S ONLY SHOWN UP AS A FACILITATOR IF SHE'S INVOLVED AT ALL IN THESE WEIRD WORLD-WARPS, IT'S ALWAYS AS SOMEONE WHO MOVES THINGS ALONG OR IS A SOURCE OF POWER. THE QUESTION IS: WHY IS SHE DOING IT?

A BETTER ONE IS HOW ARE WE GOING TO FIND OUT? IN A FEW MINUTES, EVERYTHING WILL CHANGE AND WE'LL FORGET WHO WE ARE AGAIN.

WE'VE BEEN BUILDING A RESISTANCE. AT LEAST, WE START OUT A LITTLE MORE SUSPICIOUS OF OUR SURROUNDINGS EVERY TIME.

...said they, it was not let it want for food...  
...of his eyes, and soon showed itself to be a wise and...  
...nt was getting ready to go into the forest to cut wood, when he said...  
...uld bring the cart to me...  
...Tom T...  
...and said, ...  
...nsequence...  
...d the man...  
...came, the mother...  
...it went quite properly...  
...g a corner...  
...and one of...  
...e right...  
...wever...  
...ain...  
...e right...  
...hey did...  
...of their...  
...We...  
...lied in...  
...umb...  
...ed in...  
...ne far...  
...st set...

Once upon a time, a maiden was kept prisoner by her wicked stepmother and her two ugly stepsisters, who looked remarkably like one ugly stepsister...

I MIGHT HAVE A WAY

IT'S MAGIC TIME...

OKAY, LET'S JUST CALL A HALT TO THIS ALL-DRAG REVUE RIGHT ABOUT NOW BEFORE ANY MORE PRINCES GET INVOLVED, SHALL WE?

WHO ARE YOU CALLING UGLY?

UGLY ENOUGH FOR TWO. THAT'S PRETTY BAD.

We are getting through this story if it takes all day.

ANYTHING TO GET OUT OF THESE HEELS

Then say your lines.

HA-HA, CINDERELLA! THERE IS TO BE A BALL TONIGHT WHERE EVERY UNWEED GIRL IN THE LAND WILL BE PRESENTED TO THE PRINCE. HE WILL PICK ONE AS HIS BRIDE!

NOW, stupid.

TEE-HEE. I'M SURE IT SHALL BE ME.

NO, IT SHALL BE ME. TITTER-TITTER

That's better.

COME, MY DAUGHTER—ER,  
DAUGHTERS. LET US GO TO THE BALL  
WHILE CINDERELLA CLEANS THE HOUSE!  
HA-HA-HA-HAAA... HA

OH, WHO IS ME. I  
CANNOT GO TO THE BALL,  
AND EVEN IF I COULD, WHO WOULD  
LOOK UPON A SCULLERY MAN  
LIKE ME?

Maid.

MAID LIKE  
ME?

DESPAIR NOT,  
CINDERELLA, FOR I AM YOUR  
FAIRY GODMOTHER!

IT'S ABOUT  
TIME YOU GOT  
HERE.

SHEEP  
JUV



READING?  
MY SON? I FIND THAT  
INTERESTING.

WELL, HE  
DID GET TO PICK  
THE BOOK. IT WAS A  
LITTLE CHALLENGING,  
BUT...

YOU LET HIM READ  
THIS BOOK? IT'S QUITE  
DANGEROUS IF YOU DON'T  
KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING.  
MANY HAVE BEEN LOST IN ITS  
ILLUSORY WORLDS.

I WAS CAREFUL  
AND I THINK SOMEONE  
LEARNED A LESSON  
ABOUT POWER, DIDN'T  
YOU, DYSON?

YEAH,  
KINDA.

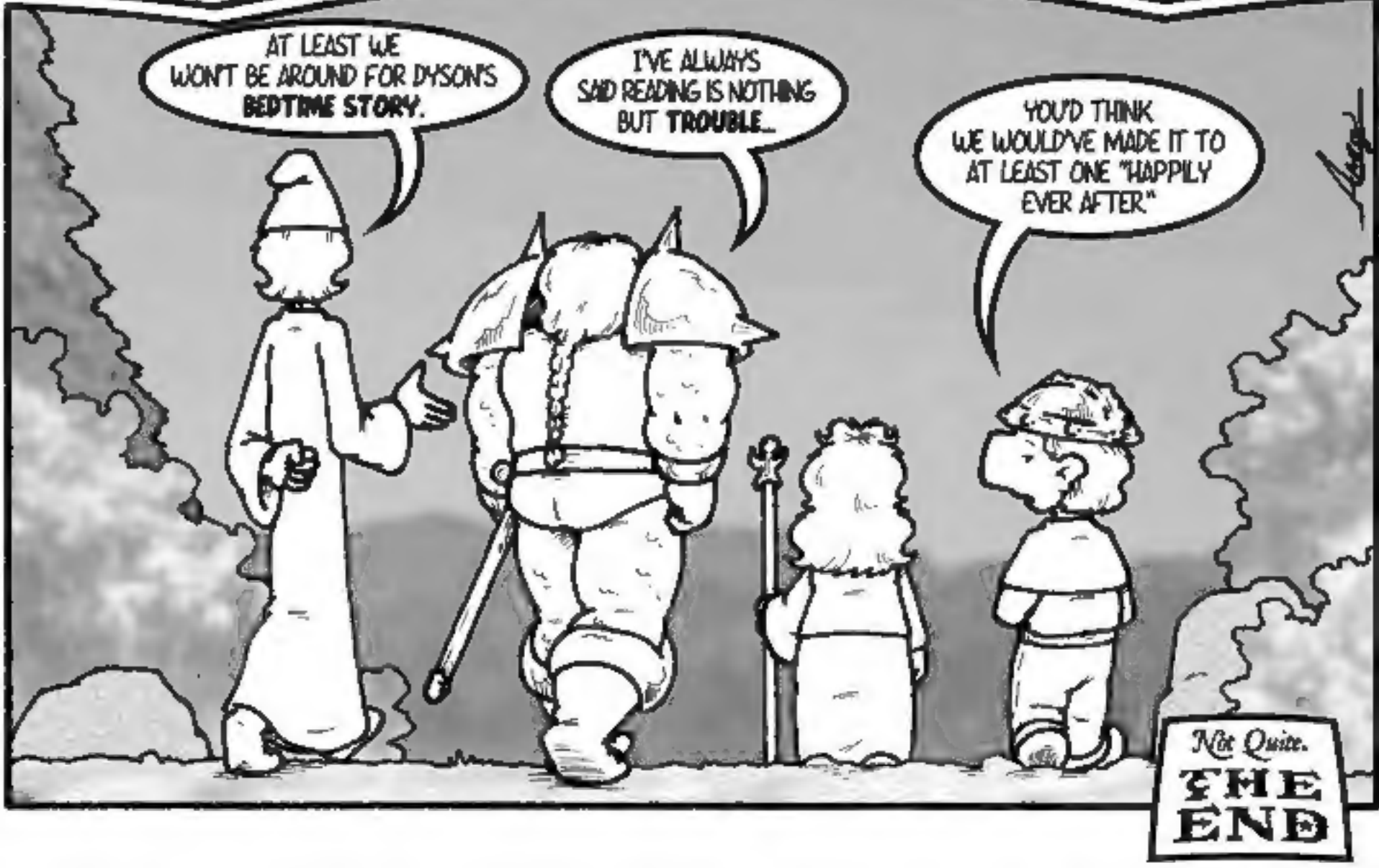
ILLUSORY  
WORLDS--?

YOU CAN'T **FORCE**  
PEOPLE TO DO WHAT  
YOU WANT 'EM TO. THEY  
HAVE TO **TRUST** YOU OR  
**BELIEVE** IN WHAT YOU  
DO. OTHERWISE, THEY'LL  
**FIGHT** YOU WHENEVER  
THEY CAN.

WAIT. I  
THINK I  
REMEMBER  
PIFFANY ASKED  
US TO HELP  
BABY-SIT...

THERE  
WAS A **BRIGHT  
FLASH**...

SUCH **WISDOM**  
AT SUCH A **YOUNG AGE!**  
I THANK YOU ALL FOR HELPING HIM  
LEARN WHAT IT TOOK ME AGES TO.  
YOU HAVE MY **GRATITUDE**,  
AS WELL AS PIFFANY'S  
**HOURLY FEE**...





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